



Mary Mother of God Mission Society

Reviving the Catholic Church in Eastern Russia

Dear Benefactors,

June 4, 2008

Thank you and God bless you for your contribution! Your help came in the nick of time, as we were really scrapping the bottom of the barrel, as they say. I guess that some days of worry about how I can pay the bills is good for me! It teaches me to trust in God more. With what is going on in the world, I guess we could all learn that lesson better! So thank you for being there for us in our need!

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Here is a nice photo of the kids in Lesozovodsk. We feed 40 kids there every Saturday! These are kids who have homes, but whose parents are very poor, so that the kids don't get enough nutrition. I think we've been doing that five years already. Of course we would like to help them more, and especially I'd love to have a Scout troop there for the boys (many of whom don't have dads) but, so far, we haven't found anybody trustworthy with experience to be scoutmaster there. Of course the kids are happy that we care about them. Some of them take the

catechism class from the parish, which gives them also some social activities on Saturday mornings. The kids are grateful for our help, which means they are grateful for your help!

Now I'll tell you about another really big worry--Priests for our parishes! We have 15 parishes in our deanery (if you include Sakhalin Island.) And there are seven priests, but most of us have to be gone quite often, either to get visas or to raise funds. The result is that it is hard to cover all the parish needs. Especially in the summers we are stretched, and there are retreats and camps that need chaplains, too, so that we can take advantage of the summer weather to work with people when it isn't snowing and freezing! What a blessing it will be that Brother Oleg will be ordained a priest on July 20! We can add one priest to the pool. But vocations are such a big need. The same is true in America! Our friend Father Bob Stoeckig is the only priest at the 9000 family parish of St Joseph Husband of Mary in Las Vegas! Wow! Every Monday we offer a Holy Mass for vocations!

Your spiritual and monetary help is most important to us! We can't live without it! Recently a man came to the door who had taken our "Christian Faith by Mail" course while he was in prison. He was just released, and is anxious to visit his son for the first

time who was placed in an orphanage in Ussuryysk (two hours from here). He said they gave him 100 rubles (\$4.20) when he was released, and, unfortunately I could only give him 100 rubles, too, because it is all we had at the time! So he'll have to beg somewhere for another 100 rubles before he will have enough to visit his son. Luckily people are looking for workers now, so I think he will be able to find a job.

Perhaps some people think that with the completion of the rectory and the dedication of the church we don't need financial help. Actually, it is the opposite! We had to finish those projects or lose the property to the government! And they were completed with funds that were specified for that purpose by donors. Meanwhile, our work with orphans, the elderly, students, Crisis Pregnancy Centers, and evangelization continue, and we still need regular financial support for all these things. . So thank you for your monetary help, and please pray for vocations!

Fr Sebastian, who currently is pastor is Nakhodka, had an emergency call from the Bishop to go to Sakhalin Island, because all three parishes there are currently without a priest, since the congregation that was working there decided to recall all their priests from Russia. They need an English-speaking priest on Sakhalin because of all the American and Filipino parishioners who are working on the gas fields there. So we will have to stretch to help take care of Nakhodka for a while. And yesterday Fr Kshishtov called from Romanovka to say that he had to return to Poland for a stay in the hospital, so we'll have to take care of Romanovka, too. And Fr Daniel has to head to Michigan for his father's burial and for fundraising, so I won't be bored for a while! Deacon Oleg will be a big help during the month before his ordination to the priesthood.

Sometimes little events give me hope. Yesterday a young man came to the rectory to say that he was a student journalist and had been given the assignment to report on a local church. He went to an Orthodox church, and they told him that if he didn't even know the Our Father he had no business being there. So he came here. He was shocked and wide-eyed to see how well we received him, but what amazed me more was what a wonderful young man he turned out to be! Dare I hope he'll come back sometime, and attend Mass? I'd sure like to find more young people like him! And what a loss for the Orthodox Church. We hear these stories all the time about how people are treated there, so it is no wonder that people look elsewhere. And then we get accused of "proselytism" if somebody becomes Catholic. I wonder if "Marketing" shouldn't be a required course in Orthodox seminaries.

Sorry if I bored you with my ramblings, but God bless you for all that you do for us and for the missions! Of course today at Mass I'll pray for you.

Yours truly,

V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.